

A bill co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.) would send out alerts to help catch those responsible for violent crimes against police officers.

The National Blue Alert Act, co-sponsored by South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham (R) and Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy (D), would work similar to the Amber Alert system, which sends out information on abducted children.

The bill, which was introduced last week, would expand nationwide a system already in place in Maryland, Cardin said.

In the first half of 2010, 87 police officers died in the line of duty in the United States, making it one of the worst years for officer fatalities in two decades, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, which tracks officer deaths.

U.S. Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Dist. 5) co-sponsored similar legislation in the House of Representatives in September.

Maryland's Blue Alert system was scheduled to begin Oct. 1, but after Maryland State Police Trooper First Class Wesley Brown was killed outside an Applebee's restaurant in Prince George's County in June, Gov. Martin O'Malley signed an executive order to begin the alerts immediately.

A Prince George's County police officer working off-duty as a security guard was stabbed this past weekend, and a suspect was arrested Sunday. A department spokeswoman said no alert was issued because the officer's wound was superficial.

Brown was one of five police officers who have died this year in Maryland; the other four deaths were the result of vehicle crashes, said John Shanks, a spokesman for the officers memorial fund.

Cardin Introduces Blue Alert Bill in Senate

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